THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – PASTOR IKE GRAHAM

CGBCI 2026 Conference

Jesus and the CGBCI

How are you doing on your chart of the 7 churches of Revelation 2-3? Have you searched out what the commendation, condemnation, counsel and comfort of Jesus was to the church in Smyrna?

The church at Smyrna was one of two churches in Revelation 2-3 which did not receive any condemnation from the Lord. The other church is Philadelphia. Why doesn't the church at Smyrna receive any condemnation? On the one hand, the answer is simple – there was nothing to condemn! On the other hand, what brought about the Lord's praise of this church? It was their understanding of God's purpose for adversity and their biblical response to it. The first thing that Jesus says to this church is that He was dead and is alive. Death is not the end for Christians. These believers who faced persecution knew their Bibles. They understood God's purpose for suffering and adversity. If we were to categorize the purposes of God in allowing suffering and adversity, we would come up with at least 5 categories. Now, each category could have a number of subpoints, but there would be at least these 5.

1. God is glorified in our suffering and adversity – John 9:3; 11:4; the believer who has cancer and says, "pray for me to honor God through this trial" glorifies God. Think about the blind man in John 9.
2. We live in a fallen world – Romans 8:22-23; we get colds, sweat, have allergies like everyone else all around the globe.
3. Personal sin has consequences – Deut. 29:19-21; Prov. 16:18; Acts 5:3; there is a story about a skylark who didn't like to dig worms for food. One day, he saw a man hollering "Earth worms for sale!" He asked, "What's the deal?" The man traded 2 worms for a feather. Great deal the skylark thought until the day came when he couldn't fly. Sin and Satan deceive us into "deals." If I just look at pornography once…God will forgive me for…
4. God is making us like Jesus (sanctification) – Romans 8:29-30; Psalm 119:71; Proverbs 12:10 reads, "A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, but the compassion of the wicked is cruel." Are you becoming kinder because you are a Christian? Do you think more about God's Kingdom as life goes on? How are you becoming more like Jesus? Are you more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kinder, more faithful, gentler, have more self control?
5. Satan and demons – Job; Job's suffering glorified God as God Himself testifies in Job 42:7. Jesus says the believers in Smyrna were rich. Being rich spiritually is, hands down, far better than being rich monetarily (Matthew 19:23; Luke 12:13-34).

CONFERENCE DETAILS

Special thanks to Cathy Burns and Chris Burns for preparing the CGBCI website to receive your reservations at Laurelville. In the near future, you will be able to reserve lodging, choose meals and pay for both online. You will also be able to register for Conference. In addition, all churches will receive a poster and bulletin insert concerning Conference sometime after Thanksgiving. The Executive Panel will be meeting at Laurelville to plan for the Conference October 20-22. Brother Reuben Auten and his wife, Tasha, will be assisting Pastor Chris Knight with YCON.

Pricing is for July 1-6, 2026. Pricing is all inclusive as follows:

- o Solar House/Guest House $143 (42 rooms)
- o Laurel Inn Motel $115 (8 rooms)
- o Single family cabins $170 (2 cabins)
- o Cottages (sleeps up to 16) $350 (4 cottages)
- o RV camp sites $55 (July 3, 2026 sites are taken)
- o Tent camp sites $35

Meals would be Breakfast-$12; Lunch-$15; Dinner-$18 and children ½ price (0-2 no cost). There is a snack shop at the Welcome Center and there are kitchens in the Guest House and the Solar House. Mt. Pleasant, PA is 4 miles away.

BEREAN FAITH FELLOWSHIP – PASTOR GORDY HARMON

Greetings Beloved Brethren,

BFF (Berean Faith Fellowship) began to meet in the barn at our home in August of 2012. In September we were led (by way of prayer) to a building and property in Mount Vernon and voted to take on a mortgage of $160,000, an impossible amount for a church our size, but we had faith the Lord would provide. There have been many ups and downs along the way, but our God is Faithful!! We were hoping to pay the building off in 2026, but God sent a gift that permitted us to pay it off in September of 2025.

That part of our thirteen year long journey is completed, all Glory to God. But so many of you, as individuals and churches and the fellowship, have an eternal share in this great accomplishment!! Through your prayers and giving, and workdays, Nehemiah Team, NET, and more!! Praise God for you!! We are still a small flock, but we are growing spiritually in amazing ways. Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we do not faint!! God Bless you all!!

NEW TROY GBC – PASTOR ROBERT MENSINGER

God is continuing to bless here at New Troy. Our attendances and offerings have been holding up well despite our small numbers. We had 2 visitors for our morning service last Sundays.

My wife Lila has finished her chemo treatments and was given a clean bill of health by her Oncologist, Dr. Onujiogu. She will need follow-up treatments until they are convinced the cancer is

completely gone. Thank you all for your cards and phone calls and encouragement to me and my wife through this difficult time. Praise God for his blessings and mercy upon us.

Pastor Ron Welsh is wrapping up his study in Leviticus for our adult Sunday school class and is preparing to begin a study in Hebrews next. He has returned to substitute teaching to supplement his income but is seeking something more substantial. I am now in chapter thirteen of Revelation and the series is going very well.

My Brother Eddie Mensinger was here on Sunday, August 31 to preach for the morning service. We had thirty people in attendance and eighteen stayed for the pot- luck dinner after the morning service. Thanks for your continued prayers and support.

NATIONAL EVANGELISM TEAM (NET) – PASTOR DEL MILLER

Thanks for your interest in the ministry of NET. Our ministry in Ohio and Tennessee this past July had some memorable moments. Daron McAllister was a vital part of the team and the leadership again this year. He took the time to write about some of his experiences and observations. The following paragraph is from him:

I enjoyed the nursing home visits. The audience is more than just those in attendance. The staff nearby can hear us, visitors to the home walk by, residents making their way to different parts stop and watch a little. This seems like a broader field to scatter seeds, never knowing what impact is being made. I had an opportunity to talk with a man that appeared to have at the very least some memory loss. As I realized he had a difficult time answering easy questions, my mind wondered about his ability to hear and understand the gospel. I was saddened to think he may never get another opportunity to accept God's plan of salvation even though he may have years left here on earth with a physical body that would continue while his mind seemed to be coming to a stop. I decided that what I should do is present the gospel and hope that he has moments of clarity in which he could still make decisions. At minimum, I would get a chance to practice giving a gospel message with no objections. This seed was planted in the hope that God would use it at the right time.

We appreciated Daron's help in many ways. He led team devotions this year and provided very thoughtful insights and encouragements as we met each day. We have found it necessary to adjust the dates for NET 26. The dates that we had previously listed conflicted with the camp schedule. As a result, we now have the earliest NET dates that we have ever tried. Your prayers are appreciated that we will be able to work through everything. These dates may make it more difficult for some to participate, but in at least one case, the early dates could make it possible for someone who has never been able to get involved.

The new dates are May 30-June 11, 2026 with training being May 30-June 4 at a location yet to be determined. The outreach ministry will be at North Buffalo GBC in Kittanning, PA and will be June 5-11, 2026. If you have questions about the plans for NET 26, please contact us. NET 26 will be our twentieth trip. It is hard to believe! Twenty years used to be a long time!

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